

## PREFACE

**By Emily Lapper and Anna Johnston**

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The genesis and development of a student law journal is not unlike the educational journey of a law student. From those first fumbling steps into the halls of legal academia to our acceptance into the Bar, the journey of a fledgling advocate is marked with struggle, reform and, at times, triumph. In infancy, journal and student alike are slightly awestruck by the commanding presence of intellect that has walked the halls before us. After time, we learn to defy custom, to test the boundaries and challenge the wisdom of our superiors. Finally, during this slow process of maturation we begin to discover an expressive form that enables us to be useful, to fill necessary gaps or provide much needed services; we become wise, even.

Originally, *Appeal* adopted the style of a magazine, characterized by shorter articles with relatively sparse footnoting. Over the years, its aesthetic and contents have shifted to that of an academic journal, with longer articles that rely significantly more on references. It was during this transition that the journal acquired a spine, which, in conjunction with its more compact size, makes it a comfortable fit on just about any bookshelf. This adaptation was not accidental: as *Appeal* grew and developed in form, its content and purpose concurrently transitioned from being a forum for students to gain experience in legal scholarship to also being an opportunity for those voices to impact and inform the law. Along with the 'rebranding' it underwent for Volume 12 in 2007, adopting its signature green jacket and more mature style, *Appeal* confidently put itself forth as a strong player in the field of Canadian legal scholarship and has proven itself to be an important component of research libraries across the country.

*Appeal* is not about aiming to please. It is about respect for law, but it is also about testing the law. It is about close examination of law in all its applications, bringing innovative ideas and new modes of communicating to the growing body of Canadian legal scholarship. It is also about encouraging new voices to be heard in legal dialogue. A common perception abounds that student legal scholarship lacks sufficient experience and knowledge to provide new insights into legal issues. Not true. Students are capable of producing high-quality, provocative work that can form a part of the Canadian legal literature. Many of us enter law school with diverse and often extensive experience as professionals in other fields, lending relevance to our voices and insight into a wide range of legal issues and topics. As a vehicle to support new methodologies in and approaches to legal scholarship, *Appeal* aims to enrich the legal community by playing an active role in its development. Our articles have begun to be referenced. Our voices are being heard.

It has been a great honour and a rewarding experience to have edited this 15th Volume of *Appeal*, which contains some of the journal's strongest academic work to date. The range of legal issues discussed and perspectives drawn from in these articles are as impressive in their breadth as they are in their depth. From a deep and thoughtful examination of the

ways in which customary law infuses our appreciation, both in a cultural and a legal sense, of the environment, to a critical analysis of the British Columbia's approach to civil rights in the context of employment contracts, the authors featured in this issue provide insight and thoughtfulness that is nothing short of remarkable in a student journal. Further, the articles often reach out beyond an abstract academic realm, confronting such divisive and relevant social issues as specialized courts for veterans, violence towards prostitutes and bans against blood donated by gay men. It takes boldness to confront these issues, and sheer courage to embark upon critique of them.

Of course, any commemoration of *Appeal's* 15th anniversary would ring hollow without an acknowledgment of the overwhelming contributions by the teachers, mentors and supervisors who have provided their assistance over the years. Individually and collectively, you have pushed the journal to higher standards. Since its inception in 1986, you have helped shape the articles that have appeared between its covers and the design of those covers themselves. Your encouragement has been invaluable and your certitude in our abilities, inspirational. *Appeal* at 15 is an embodiment of the processes and thoughts that have formed it, and we thank you for the impressions you have left.